

Minutes - June 28, 2010 RETI SSC Meeting

Rich Ferguson opened the meeting. SSC members (at the CAISO meeting room or on the phone) introduced themselves. No changes to the May 4 SSC meeting minutes were identified and the minutes were considered approved.

Roger Johnson of the CEC provided a permitting update of the power plant projects under review by the Energy Commission. The spreadsheet indicated the expected Commission decision date. A joint (with BLM) Staff Assessment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SA/DEIS) has been prepared for the solar thermal plants and BLM will be preparing separately a Final EIS for the projects. The Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) and the Renewable Energy Policy Group (which oversees REAT) are meeting regularly to coordinate on the ARRA projects. The CEC website has links to these activities. BLM and local agencies are also permitting solar PV and wind projects. CAISO Phase II interconnection studies are expected this week and will include downstream impacts of the solar projects. Questions/suggestions were raised regarding the upgrades: are these part of the permitting process (yes, to the extent data is available); the CTPG lines should be compared to the upgrades; and CEC should evaluate the upgrades to see if corridor designation is warranted.

Roger also provided an update on the DRECP. A draft planning agreement is in place; a new Executive Director will be identified to replace Bob Copper; two environmental consultants have been selected; and a draft work plan for the consultants was posted. A 45-member Stakeholder Advisory Group is meeting monthly. Its next meeting is July 14. RETI's work has informed the DRECP; 102 transmission line segments were identified. A map showing suggested development areas has been produced. The next major milestone is the Draft Interim Mitigation Strategy. The planning agreement lays out the process between now and completion of the NCCP – projects in the desert will continue being evaluated on a case by case process.

Ashley Conrad-Saydah, back from Washington DC, provided an update of BLM's Solar Programmatic EIS. No major changes have occurred. Argonne National Lab is preparing the Solar PEIS and they visited the solar zones and took pictures. They are posted at www.solareis.anl.gov. The PEIS will have state-specific chapters and a chapter on mitigation. The California chapter alone is ~1500 pages. Each chapter is broken down by solar energy zones (CA has 4). The chapters discuss resource issues associated with the zones, challenges. The PEIS uses existing data except for new visual data. All together the solar zones comprise more than 300,000 acres and more than 10,000 MW. A draft of the PEIS is expected in November. BLM expects that a decision regarding certification of the FEIS will occur in summer 2011.

Robert Sparks of the CAISO discussed a CAISO review regarding how much spare transmission capacity is on the existing system based on interconnection studies for proposed interconnection facilities. The study was performed at the request of the CPUC in an effort to get an idea of how much existing capacity might be used for new renewable energy facilities. The CAISO included DPV2, Sunrise and Tehachapi as part of the existing system. The CPUC asked the CAISO to provide information on existing capacity that might be available for 30 specific CREZs. The CAISO produced a quick study in about one

week in an attempt to be helpful to the CPUC in its LTPP process, but the CAISO stresses that the results are preliminary and based on limited information.

Gary DeShazo discussed the CAISO planning process. CAISO has its own planning process but is also a member of CTPG. This year CAISO has a 33% renewable plan that is being developed in parallel with the 2011 plan. Both plans have extensive stakeholder involvement/meetings. CAISO plans will incorporate results of CTPG. The 33% plan is expected by the end of the year and results will be shared with CTPG.

Rich Ferguson invited SSC members to put forth ideas regarding next RETI steps. Suggestions included: look at permitting at gateways; evaluate "available transmission;" look at expanding grid utilization (squeezing more out of the system); evaluate the effect of retirement of coal plants; provide input in criteria for determining "least regrets transmission;" look at DRECP changes and how they alter CREZ and transmission lines; consider opportunities for corridor designation; meet 3-4 times a year and produce major report every few years; prepare a RETI "How To" Guide that for use by others (e.g., western entities and other states); evaluate DRECP/Solar PEIS for honest check on whether RETI is heading in the right direction; evaluate the RETI process; and RETI's strength is communication with a broad set of stakeholders and this communication facilitates inclusion of a broader set of voices in CA transmission planning activities.

Mike Deis and Jan Strack provided a CTPG update. The Phase 3 report was posted June 14 and includes new runs, including a best CREZ scenario and alternatives from independent transmission owners. A methodology for determining least-regrets lines may be in the July draft report. RETI environmental scoring will be included. The CTPG Executive Committee is meeting 7/1 to discuss schedule and approach. Stakeholder meeting is expected the 3rd or 4th week of July.

Jan Strack discussed the Phase 3 Study results (see detailed slides). 19 different scenarios were modeled. The results of the queue projects and the best CREZ were very different.

Anne Gillette discussed recent CPUC activities regarding the LTPP process. CPUC is trying to develop a stronger link between resource planning, transmission line planning and transmission line permitting. CPUC recently evaluated 4 scenarios: lowest cost; time-constrained; environmentally constrained; and trajectory (extrapolating from past/current projects). Wholesale DG assumptions were discussed; in some cases, wholesale DG competed with CREZ projects and not as much transmission was needed. The most transmission was needed under the environmentally-constrained scenario. There should be a link to the report on the CPUC's 2010 LTPP page.

Brewster Birdsall discussed Aspen's modification of RETI EWG CREZ scoring for the CPUC LTPP project, and Snuller Price of E3 discussed an estimate of wholesale distributed generation. Both presentations will be posted on the RETI page of June 28th meeting materials.

Discussion of the LTPP process ensued. RETI EWG will try to provide feedback to Anne by 7/9.

The next SSC meeting will occur in early August. An email will be sent out regarding date, time and place.